

11 Townscape and Visual

11.1 Introduction

Macro Works Ltd. has been commissioned to carry out a Landscape / Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (“LVIA”) of the ‘College Green Project’ in Dublin City centre. Whilst centred on College Green the proposed works include all of Foster Place and extend westwards to Anglesea Street. The Proposed Project also encompasses the loop of northern Grafton Street, Suffolk Street and Church Lane, whilst extending northwards for a short distance along Westmoreland Street.

The LVIA describes the landscape context of the Proposed Project and assesses the likely landscape and visual impacts of the Proposed Project on the receiving environment. Although closely linked, landscape and visual impacts are assessed separately.

Landscape Impact Assessment (LIA) relates to assessing effects of a development on the landscape / townscape as a resource in its own right and is concerned with how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape / townscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the setting and its distinctive character.

Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) relates to assessing effects of a development on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people. This deals with how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the content and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or introduction of new elements.

Cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment is concerned with additional changes to the landscape or visual amenity caused by the Proposed Project in conjunction with other developments (associated or separate to it), or actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future.

11.2 Assessment Methodology

11.2.1 General

Although this is a ‘townscape’ assessment, it utilises the same outline methodology as would be employed for the more familiar Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) of developments in rural settings. The justification for this approach is provided in Section **11.2.2** below.

11.2.2 Guidance and Legislation

This LVIA uses methodology as prescribed in the following guidance documents:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publication ‘Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements (2002 – Revised Draft 2015) and the accompanying Advice Notes on Current Practice in the Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements (2003– Revised Draft 2015); and
- Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and landscape Institute (UK) ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ (GLVIA-2013).

It is important to note that the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ (GLVIA-2013) follow the European Landscape Convention (ELC) definition of landscape: “*Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*” (Council of Europe, 2000). Thus, GLVIA-2013 covers all landscapes from “*high mountains and wild countryside to urban and fringe farmland (rural landscapes), marine and coastal landscapes (seascapes) and the landscapes of villages towns and cities (townscapes)*” - whether protected or degraded. College Green is a wholly urban setting or ‘townscape’ and this is defined in GLVIA-2013 in the following manner (section 2.7):

“- ‘Townscape’ refers to areas where the built environment is dominant. Villages, towns and cities often make important contributions as elements in wider-open landscapes but townscape means the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings, the relationships between them, the different types of urban spaces, including green spaces, and the relationship between buildings and open spaces. There are important relationships with historic dimensions of landscape and townscape, since evidence of the way the villages, towns and cities change and develop over time contributes to their current form and character.”

In this instance there is a strong interrelationship between the ‘townscape’ and ‘cultural heritage’ assessments. However, as stated at section 5.11 of GLVIA-2013; “*the sharing of relevant baseline information should not be confused with the need for separate cultural heritage appraisals such as historic landscape characterisation and assessment of historic townscape appraisal, or there will be a danger of both double handling and inappropriate judgements by non-experts. It is particularly important that responsibilities are clear in considering any effects on the settings and views for historic buildings, conservation areas and other heritage assets.*”

11.2.3 Study Area

The core study area in this instance is the area from where the physical changes to College Green and surrounding streets can be seen and, within which, the townscape character may be noticeably altered. However, the traffic management implications of the Proposed Project have potentially broader reaching townscape and visual impacts in the form of altered traffic volumes on surrounding streets for example. Thus, a wider secondary study area is also identified in this instance.

The core study area consists of College Green extending c.50m northwards along Westmoreland Street and westward to Anglesea Street including all of the intervening Foster Place. It also includes the block northern Grafton Street, Suffolk Street and Church Lane.

The wider study area potentially affected by traffic management impacts resulting from the Proposed Project includes the minor works on Dame Street, Trinity Street, Andrew's Street and Church Lane and the impact of rerouting traffic in the area.

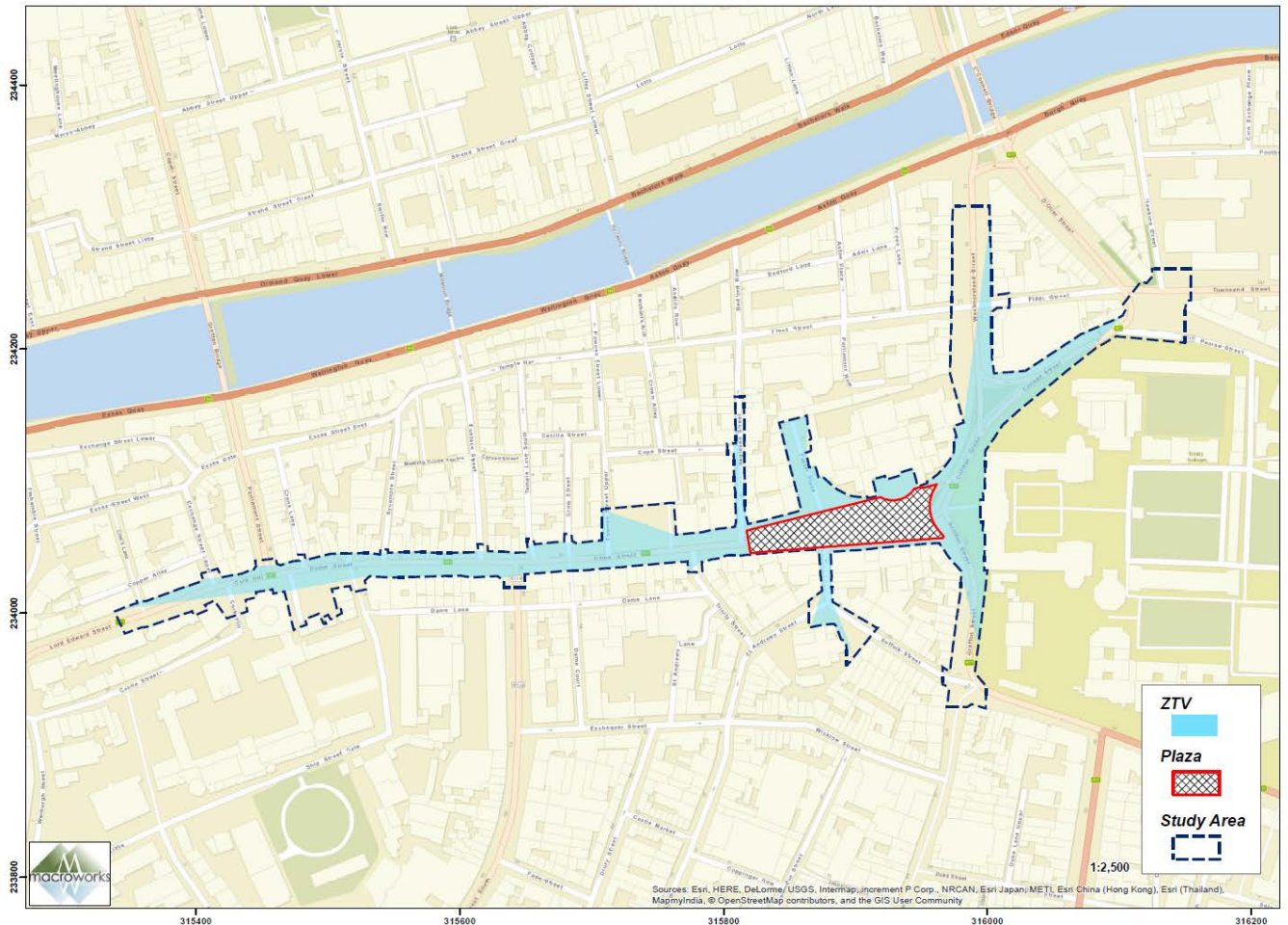


Figure 11.1 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility / Study Area - College Green Plaza

11.2.4 Site Visits

A series of site visits were undertaken by Macro Works staff members in December 2016 and January 2017 to select viewpoint locations from which to prepare photomontages of the Proposed Project for the visual impact assessment. Field notes and photography have also been captured to inform the baseline townscape setting description.

11.2.5 Consultation

Public consultation has been undertaken in respect of the future design of College Green. This is described in detail in Chapter 3 of the EIS.

The design presented for assessment herein has taken account of feedback from this public consultation process.

The landscape and visual assessment for College Green has also been undertaken in consultation with Planners and Engineers from Dublin City Council.

11.2.6 Categorisation of the Baseline Environment

In addition to descriptions of the baseline setting of the Proposed Project an analysis of urban form and function has been undertaken. This is based on foundation principals of urban design first introduced in Kevin Lynch's publication: 'The image of the City' (1960), the most widely read urban design publication of all time. This outlines that people tend to perceive urban areas (townscapes) as a series of 'Paths', 'Edges', 'Districts', 'Nodes' and 'Landmarks'. An analysis of the way in which College Green is likely to be currently perceived in these terms is provided in the baseline for later comparison with how such perceptions might change following completion of the Proposed Project and whether these changes will result in positive or negative impacts. This aspect of the baseline is concerned mainly with determining townscape impacts or effects on urban fabric and character, as opposed to visual impacts from particular viewpoints.

11.2.7 Impact Assessment Methodology

11.2.7.1 Townscape Impact Assessment Criteria

When assessing the potential impacts on the townscape resulting from a Proposed Project, the following criteria are considered:

- Townscape character, value and sensitivity;
- Magnitude of likely impacts; and
- Significance of landscape effects

The sensitivity of the townscape to change is the degree to which a particular setting can accommodate changes or new elements without unacceptable detrimental effects to its essential characteristics. Landscape Value and Sensitivity is classified using the following criteria set out in **Table 11.1**.

Table 11.1 - Townscape Value and Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Areas where the townscape character exhibits a very low capacity for change in the form of development. Examples of which are high value townscapes, protected at an international or national level (e.g. World Heritage Site), where the principal management objectives are likely to be protection of the existing character.

High	Areas where the townscape character exhibits a low capacity for change in the form of development. Examples of which are high value townscapes, protected at a national or regional level, where the principal management objectives are likely to be considered conservation of the existing character.
Medium	Areas where the townscape character exhibits some capacity and scope for development. Examples of which are townscapes, which have a designation of protection at a county level or at non-designated local level where there is evidence of local value and use.
Low	Areas where the townscape character exhibits a higher capacity for change from development. Typically this would include lower value, non-designated townscapes that may also have some elements or features of recognisable quality, where management objectives include, enhancement, repair and restoration.
Negligible	Areas of townscape character that include derelict sites and degradation where there would be a reasonable capacity to embrace change or the capacity to include the development proposals. Management objectives in such areas could be focused on change, creation of townscape improvements and/or restoration.

The magnitude of a predicted townscape impact is a product of the scale, extent or degree of change that is likely to be experienced as a result of the Proposed Project. The magnitude takes into account whether there is a direct physical impact resulting from the loss of landscape components and/or a change that extends beyond the immediate setting that may have an effect on the townscape character **Table 11.2** refers.

Table 11.2 - Magnitude of Townscape Impacts

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Change that would be large in extent and scale with the loss of critically important landscape elements and features, that may also involve the introduction of new uncharacteristic elements or features that contribute to an overall change of the townscape in terms of character, value and quality.
High	Change that would be more limited in extent and scale with the loss of important townscape elements and features, that may also involve the introduction of new uncharacteristic elements or features that contribute to an overall change of the townscape in terms of character, value and quality.
Medium	Changes that are modest in extent and scale involving the loss of landscape characteristics or elements that may also involve the introduction of new uncharacteristic elements or features that would lead to changes in landscape character, and quality.

Low	Changes affecting small areas of landscape character and quality, together with the loss of some less characteristic landscape elements or the addition of new features or elements.
Negligible	Changes affecting small or very restricted areas of landscape character. This may include the limited loss of some elements or the addition of some new features or elements that are characteristic of the existing landscape or are hardly perceivable.
Positive	Changes that restore a degraded landscape or reinforce characteristic landscape elements

The significance of a townscape impact is based on a balance between the sensitivity of the landscape receptor and the magnitude of the impact. The significance of landscape impacts is arrived at using the following matrix set out in **Table 11.3**.

Table 11.3 - Significance of Landscape Impacts

	Sensitivity of Receptor				
Scale Magnitude	<i>Very High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Negligible</i>
Very High	Profound	Profound-substantial	Substantial	Moderate	Minor
High	Profound-substantial	Substantial	Substantial-moderate	Moderate-slight	Slight-imperceptible
Medium	Substantial	Substantial-moderate	Moderate	Slight	Imperceptible
Low	Moderate	Moderate-slight	Slight	Slight-imperceptible	Imperceptible
Negligible	Slight	Slight-imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible
Positive	Enhanced	Enhanced	Enhanced	Enhanced	Enhanced

Note: The significance matrix provides an indicative framework from which the significance of impact is derived. The significance judgement is ultimately determined by the assessor using professional judgement. Due to nuances within the constituent sensitivity and magnitude judgements, this may be up to one category higher or lower than indicated by the matrix. Judgements indicated in orange are considered to be 'significant impacts' in EIA terms.

11.2.7.2 Visual Impact Assessment Criteria

As with the townscape impact, the visual impact of the Proposed Project will be assessed as a function of sensitivity versus magnitude. In this instance the sensitivity of the visual receptor, weighed against the magnitude of the visual effect.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Unlike landscape sensitivity, the sensitivity of visual receptors has an anthropocentric basis. It considers factors such as the perceived quality and values associated with the view, the landscape context of the viewer, the likely activity they are engaged in and whether this heightens their awareness of the surrounding landscape. A list of the factors considered by the assessor in estimating the level of sensitivity for a particular visual receptor is outlined below to establish visual receptor sensitivity at each VRP:

Susceptibility of Receptors - In accordance with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (“IEMA”) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (3rd edition 2013) visual receptors most susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity are;

- *“Residents at home;*
- *People, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views;*
- *Visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience;*
- *Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area; and*
- *Travellers on road rail or other transport routes where such travel involves recognised scenic routes and awareness of views is likely to be heightened”.*

Visual receptors that are less susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity include;

- *“People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape; and*
- *People at their place of work whose attention may be focussed on their work or activity, not their surroundings and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life”.*

Recognised scenic value of the view (County Development Plan designations, guidebooks, touring maps, postcards etc.). These represent a consensus in terms of which scenic views and routes within an area are strongly valued by the population because in the case of County Developments Plans, for example, a public consultation process is required;

Views from within highly sensitive townscape areas. These are likely to be in the form of Architectural Conservation Areas, which are incorporated within the Development Plan and therefore subject to the public consultation process. Viewers within such areas are likely to be highly attuned to the townscape around them;

Primary views from residential receptors. Even within a dynamic city context views from residential properties are an important consideration in respect of residential amenity;

Intensity of use, popularity. This relates to the number of viewers likely to experience a view on a regular basis and whether this is significant at a national or regional scale;

Connection with the townscape. This considers whether or not receptors are likely to be highly attuned to views of the townscape i.e. commuters hurriedly driving on busy roads versus tourists focussed on the character and detail of the townscape;

Presence of striking or noteworthy features. A view might be strongly valued because it contains a distinctive and memorable landscape / townscape feature such as a cathedral or castle;

Historical, cultural and / or spiritual significance. Such attributes may be evident or sensed by receptors at certain viewing locations, which may attract visitors for the purposes of contemplation or reflection heightening the sense of their surroundings;

Rarity or uniqueness of the view. This might include the noteworthy representativeness of a certain townscape type and considers whether the receptor could take in similar views anywhere in the broader region or the country;

Integrity of the townscape character. This looks at the condition and intactness of the townscape in view and whether the townscape pattern is a regular one of few strongly related components or an irregular one containing a variety of disparate components;

Sense of place. This considers whether there is special sense of wholeness and harmony at the viewing location; and

Those locations which are deemed to satisfy many of the above criteria are likely to be of higher sensitivity. No relative importance is inferred by the order of listing. Overall sensitivity may be a result of a number of these factors or, alternatively, a strong association with one or two in particular.

Visual Impact Magnitude

The visual impact magnitude relates to the scale and nature of the visual change brought about by the proposal and this is reflected in the criteria contained in **Table 11.4.**

Table 11.4 - Magnitude of Visual Impacts

Criteria	Description
Very High	The proposal alters a large proportion or critical part of the available vista and is without question the most distinctive element. A high degree of visual clutter or disharmony is also generated, strongly reducing the visual amenity of the scene

High	The proposal alters a significant proportion or important part of the available vista and is one of the most noticeable elements. A considerable degree of visual clutter or disharmony is also likely to be generated, appreciably reducing the visual amenity of the scene
Medium	The proposal represents a moderate alteration the available vista, is a readily noticeable element and/or it may generate a degree of visual clutter or disharmony, thereby reducing the visual amenity of the scene.
Low	The proposal alters the available vista to a minor extent and may not be noticed by a casual observer and/or the proposal would not have a marked effect on the visual amenity of the scene
Negligible	The proposal would be barely discernible within the available vista and/or it would not detract from, and may even enhance, the visual amenity of the scene
Positive	Changes that enhance the available vista by reducing visual clutter or restoring degraded features

Visual Impact Significance

As stated above, the significance of visual impacts is a function of visual receptor sensitivity and visual impact magnitude. This relationship is expressed in the same significance matrix and applies the same EPA definitions of significance as used earlier in respect of townscape impacts (**Table 11.3** refers).

11.3 Baseline Environment

In this instance the baseline context is slightly complex as College Green is currently in a state of transition with construction works underway on the new Luas line from Stephens Green to Connolly Station. These works sweep around from the north of Dawson Street along Nassau Street and veer past the front of Trinity College from the northern end of Grafton Street. At present this area is something of a construction zone with a high degree of temporary clutter and heavy vehicle movement. Furthermore, College Green will not revert to a setting that is substantially the same as that prior to the construction of the Luas line as the traffic management system must be altered and there will also be considerable change to the physical elements and nature of this urban space. It is important to note that this appraisal does not include the Luas works described above. Instead, the Luas works must be considered as an emerging alteration to the baseline urban setting. The Luas works are not so much a cumulative adjacent development, but the justification and facilitation for the currently proposed College Green development works.

College Green is much more than its current urban form having emerged and changed over hundreds of years as Dublin spread beyond its medieval walls. Any changes to the townscape setting of College Green must, therefore, reflect an understanding of its origins as a space and a place within the both the historic and current urban fabric.

11.3.1 Historical Context of College Green

As described (in more detail) in Chapter 10 of the EIS, ‘*Archaeology, Cultural heritage and Architectural Heritage*’, College Green is located just outside of the medieval town walls of Dublin. It is in an area previously known as Hoggen Green, which is believed to have contained Viking burial mounds and a large mound known in Norse times as ‘Thing Motte’. Much of the built fabric that defined the renamed College Green emerged in the 17th century with low-lying tidal areas around the River Liffey being reclaimed and River-side quays constructed. In the latter part of the 18th Century the ‘Wide streets’ commission facilitated the demolition of the buildings enclosing Dame Street and the reconstruction of a set-back building frontage to form the wide straight street that merges with College Green today. Large civic buildings were also constructed around that time that serve to define the current space and place of College Green. These included, the Houses of Parliament, a new façade for Trinity College, the Central Bank on Foster Place. In summary, College Green has been an important civic and social space in Dublin for over 500 years.

11.3.2 Existing Urban Context of College Green

At present College Green serves as a broadened extension to Dame Street conveying vehicular traffic along both sides and, up until recently, around its eastern end to the front of Trinity College as well. Whilst the Luas Cross City works have now curtailed vehicular traffic around the eastern end of College Green, this will form part of the new route for the Luas. The vehicle lanes on the northern and southern sides of College Green are divided by paved islands. These serve as pedestrian refuge and host the statues of Henry Grattan and Thomas Davis as well as the Four Angels Fountain. The islands also host a double row of mature Plane Trees, heritage lamp standards bicycle stands and traffic signs.

Along the northern side of College Green the space is defined by the distinctive Bank of Ireland building, the façade of which, has semi-circular components divided by a recessed section supported by ornate columns. Foster Place, at the western side of the Bank of Ireland building provides a further break in the northern containment of College Green and also contains around six mature Plane trees. A more consistent and typical circa four storey façade then continues westward along the northern side of College Green down to Anglesea Street and beyond along Dame street.

The eastern end of College Green is defined by the front façade and main entrance to Trinity College, which is set back from a plinth wall and railing at the street side with an intervening, curved lawn containing the statues of Oliver Goldsmith and Edmund Burke. It is understood that the Goldsmith and Burke statues are in a Trinity arrangement with the Grattan statue on the pedestrian island within College Green.

The southern side of College Green is contained by a consistent four-storey façade of richly varied colours and architectural finishes from ornate to utilitarian (all within the Southern Shopping District ACA). The ground floors of most of these buildings are contained in retail uses with steps up from the street level. The broad Ulster Bank building at the corner of College Green and Church Lane is recessed at the street level but without openings directly onto College Green.

11.3.3 Urban Image

Drawing from terminology and guiding principles contained in Kevin Lynch's 'Image of the City' outlined in **Section 11.2.6**, College Green embodies many of the elements described (Paths, Edges, Districts, Nodes and Landmarks). Hosting roads and footpaths along all of its perimeters, it is a 'path' or major thoroughfare within the city and also at the confluence of several paths. It contains several important landmark buildings, in particular, Trinity College and the Bank of Ireland building. These act as both 'landmarks' and, in conjunction with the adjacent building facades, they also form the 'edges' of key 'districts' within Dublin City centre. The Trinity College building marks the western edge of the substantial Trinity campus, which is a district in its own right. The Bank of Ireland building and the buildings surrounding Foster Place and along Westmoreland Street, mark the south-eastern edge of the Temple Bar district. Finally, the southern facades of College Green form the edge of the southern shopping district that is centred around Grafton Street. All of these aspects of urban fabric make College Green, almost by default, a major 'node' within the city. However, it can be considered a 'node' mainly in the sense of being an important junction rather than as a destination or place of congregation in its own right.

11.3.4 Visibility and Visual Receptors

This aspect of the baseline relates to the locations from which the Proposed Project may be visible and is concerned with the later estimation of visual impacts from representative viewpoint locations. Regard is also given to the various user groups that view College Green on a daily basis as some will be more highly attuned to their surroundings (tourists and residents) than others (commuters and city centre workers).

Given the relatively enclosed nature of College Green it is only openly visible in its entirety from within its immediate setting. This includes, from within College Green itself, Foster Place and from the Dame Street approach to Trinity. Otherwise, partial visibility of College Green can be obtained from the Westmoreland Street and Grafton Street approaches as well as smaller converging streets such as Church lane and Anglesea Street. Pedestrians exiting the Trinity College campus through the Trinity College building are also afforded comprehensive views across College Green.

In terms of visual receptors (people and groups of people), those most susceptible to visual change are likely to be residents of the local area who have College Green as part of their principle everyday view. This is not an area of the city that hosts a high number of residential units and most of these are likely to be contained in the upper levels of the buildings lining Dame Street to the west of College Green. These residents as well as office workers within the buildings that flank College Green and its approach roads are the only receptors likely to be afforded elevated views across College Green where a full appreciation of its layout can be obtained.

Tourists and visitors to Dublin are also likely to be sensitive to views College Green as it forms the centre of most tourist maps and hosts an array of historical landmarks. Dublin tourists are sensitive to their visual setting in the sense of being highly attuned to the surroundings and taking their time to absorb street scenes.

This differs slightly from the sensitivity of local residents who are more susceptible to change in their day-to day-visual amenity.

Other user groups who will be potentially affected by changes to the College Green street scene are commuters on public transport, private vehicles, bicycle or foot. Passengers on the new Luas Cross City route including commuters and tourists will be afforded clear visibility of College Green as they pass through its eastern end in front of Trinity College. Shoppers passing through College Green towards the Grafton Street shopping precinct to the south or the Henry Street precinct to the north will also experience visual change to the College Green setting.

11.3.5 Dublin City Development Plan (2016-2022)

Chapter 4 – ‘Shape and Structure of the City’ of the Dublin City Development Plan (2016-2022) contains relevant policies in respect of city centre urban design, some of which relate directly to College Green. This plan and the associated urban design policies are part of an integrate approach to traffic management within Dublin City centre, which seeks deprioritise private vehicles in favour of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. The most relevant policies in respect of the Proposed Project include;

SC2: To develop the City's character by cherishing and enhancing Dublin's renowned streets, civic spaces and squares; to create further new streets as part of the public realm when the opportunities arise; to protect the grain, scale and vitality of city streets; to revitalise the north and south Georgian squares and their environs, and to upgrade Dame Street/College Green as part of the Grand Civic Spine.

SC3: To develop a sustainable network of safe, clean, attractive pedestrian routes, lanes and cycleways in order to make the city more coherent and navigable.

SC4: To promote a variety of recreational and cultural events in the city's civic spaces.

SC5: To promote the urban design and architectural principle set out in chapter 15, and in the Dublin City Public Realm Strategy 2012 in order to achieve a quality, compact, well-connected city.

SC7: To protect and enhance important views and view corridors into, out of and within the city, and to protect existing landmarks and the prominence.

Relevant Objectives within the Dublin city plan 2016 to 2022 include;

SC01: to implement a program of environmental improvements along the Grand Civic Spine from Parnell Square to Christchurch Place, including College Green and Dame Street, arising from the opportunities provided by the introduction of the College Green Bus Priority System, the Luas Cross City and the ‘Dublin’ initiative.

SC02: To implement the actions and projects contained in the Dublin City Public Realm strategy 2012 and any successor public realm strategy.

SC04: To undertake a views and prospects study, with the aim of compiling a list of views and prospects for protection and/or enhancement which would be integrated with and complement the urban form and structure of the city.

With respect to objective ‘SC04’ outlined above, even though a full ‘views and prospects’ study has not yet been undertaken, the Dublin City Development Plan does contain a map indicating ‘Key Views and Prospects (indicative)’. This appears to relate to views of key civic buildings from particular locations. The most relevant of these to the Proposed Project is a view of Trinity College from Dame Street, which encompasses all of College Green. An excerpt of the views and prospects map is provided below.

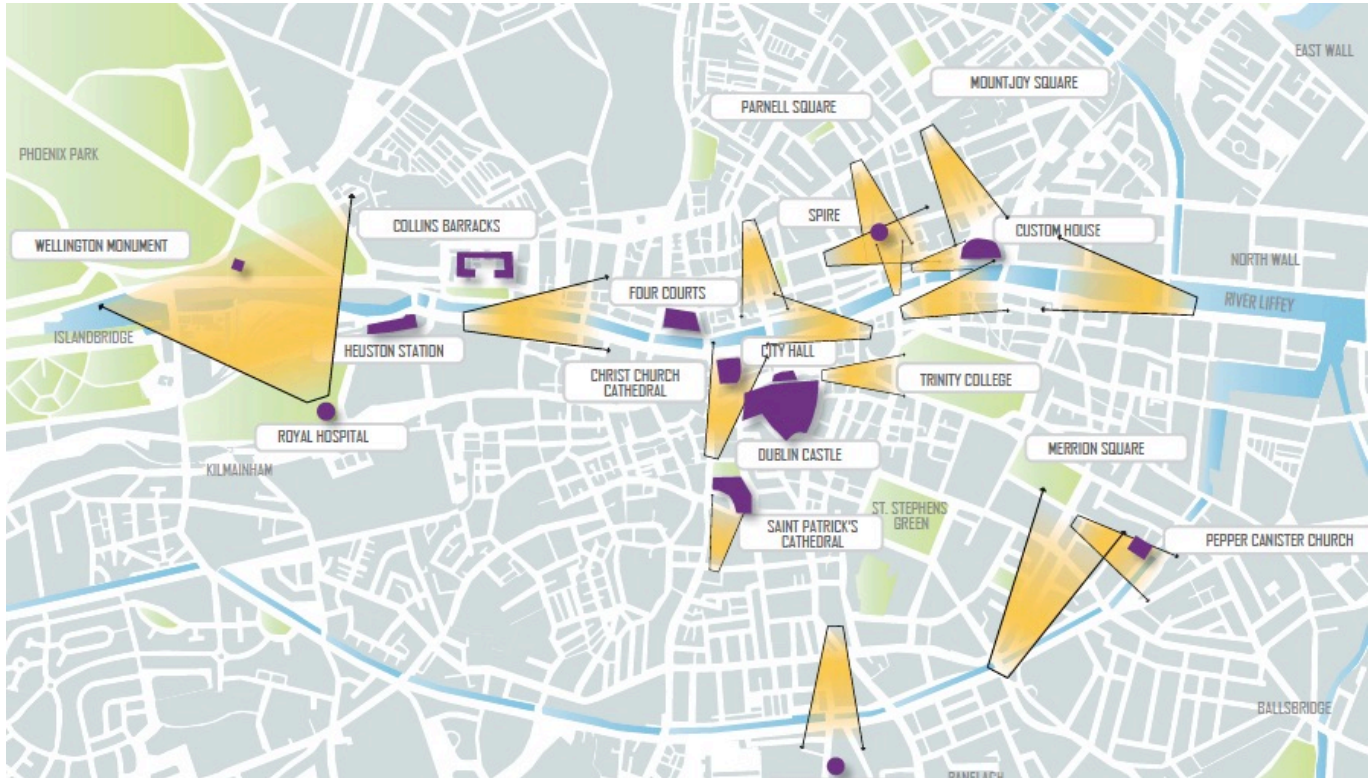


Figure 11.2 - Key Views and Prospects Map

Green Infrastructure

Volume 1 - Section 10.5.1 of the Dublin City Development Plan (2016-2022) deals with the role of green infrastructure within Dublin city. Green infrastructure is described here as an ‘*interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions that also provides associated benefits to the human population. It is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services.*’

The Dublin City Development Plan lists several policies related to green infrastructure. The following policy is deemed to be relevant to the Proposed Project:

- **GII:** *To develop a green infrastructure network through the city, thereby interconnecting strategic natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features including green spaces, rivers, canals and other physical features in terrestrial (including coastal) and marine areas.*

In addition to the policy above, Dublin City Council also have a number of Objectives related to green infrastructure, of which the following objectives are relevant to the Proposed Project:

- **“GIO1:** *To integrate Green Infrastructure solutions into new developments and as part of the development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the city.*
- **GIO2:** *To apply principles of Green Infrastructure development to inform the development management process in terms of design and layout of new residential areas, business/industrial development and other significant projects.*
- **GIO3:** *To focus on key streets in the city area between the canals for ‘greening’ by way of higher standards of planting and amenity along key routes.”*

Section 16.3.3 of the Dublin City Council Development Plan relates to existing trees within Dublin city and includes the following statement: *“Dublin City Council will consider the protection of existing trees when granting planning permission for developments and will seek to ensure maximum retention, preservation and management of important trees, groups of trees and hedges.”*

Regarding planning applications on sites where there are significant individual trees or groups/lines of trees are present, Dublin City Council will take into account the following five criteria when deciding either to protect and integrate trees into the scheme, or to permit their removal:

- Habitat/ecological value of the trees and their condition
- Uniqueness/rarity of species
- Contribution to any historical setting
- Significance of the trees in framing or defining views
- Visual and amenity contribution to streetscape

11.4 Predicted Impacts

11.4.1 Impacts on Townscape Character and Urban Fabric

The appraisal of impacts on townscape character and urban fabric balances the sensitivity of the receiving environment against the magnitude of predicted effects. This is considered in respect of both the construction stage and post-construction stages of the development.

11.4.1.1 Townscape Sensitivity

In this instance townscape sensitivity can only be considered to be **Very High**. This is on the basis that College Green is a critical element of the urban fabric of Dublin City. It is a major node for vehicular transport, cyclists and pedestrians and the heart of tourist activity. It is defined by two of Dublin’s key landmark buildings – Trinity College and the Bank of Ireland (former Houses of Parliament).

It contains a number of protected statues and monuments and is defined by facades consisting of protected buildings and an Architectural Conservation Area. All of these factors are reflected in the objectives and policies of the Dublin City Development Plan (2016-2022) in respect of urban design, architectural heritage and transport. In summary, College Green is a key core element of one of Europe's major cities.

11.4.1.2 Magnitude of Townscape Impacts – Construction Stage

It is predicted that the construction stage for the Proposed Project will last for a period of between 12 and 18 months, which represents a Temporary/Short term impact in accordance with EPA definitions. This period of construction will marginally overlap and follow the current Luas Cross City construction works currently taking place at the eastern end of College Green.

The Proposed Project construction works will interrupt current traffic flows through and in the vicinity of College Green. However, like the Luas construction works, they provide a transition to a time when vehicular transport, particularly private vehicles, will be excluded from this portion of the central city. The construction works will require the near constant movement of construction machinery on-site as well as the delivery and removal of materials by HGVs via the surrounding road network. Although the nature of heavy vehicle traffic will change during this period, the intensity will be no greater than previous levels of double-decker bus and private vehicle movements throughout this area.

There will be physical impacts to the streetscape of College Green involving the removal of existing surface materials and excavations of up to 2.5m in depth to facilitate underground infrastructure in some areas. Heritage stone kerbs and setts will be stored for later re-use in the new College Green Plaza insofar as possible. All other surface materials will be disposed of off-site.

All of the existing mature Plane trees within the central islands of College Green and at the corner of Grafton street will be removed, whilst those in Foster Place will remain and are facilitated in the project design. These will be protected during the construction stage in accordance with BS5837:2012 – 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction'. The loss of the central trees within College Green will have an immediate impact on streetscape character and in the course of construction works College Green will appear more stark and open within a context of temporary hoardings, building materials, dust, noise and general construction activity. Indeed, it will be a relatively uninviting setting that may be avoided by tourists and regular city centre occupants alike during the construction period.

On balance of the negative nature of the construction stage works on townscape character against the fact that they will only be Temporary / Short term in duration, it is considered that the magnitude of construction stage townscape impacts will be **Medium low**. When coupled with the **Very High** sensitivity of this important urban setting, the overall significance of construction stage townscape impacts is deemed to be **Moderate** in accordance with the Townscape Impact Matrix contained in **Section 11.2.7.1**.

11.4.1.3 Magnitude of Townscape Impacts – Operational Stage

Following the completion of construction works, College Green will appear transformed. Not only in relation to the construction stage works, but also the College Green that existed prior to the Luas Cross City works as there is likely to be little/no interim period between the projects.

The high quality stone paving will be a consistent pattern across the whole of College Green without kerbs or other vertical delineation. This will give a much stronger sense of College Green being a broad plaza and a destination space in its own right rather than a divided and cluttered transport node in the space between heritage facades.

The opening up of the plaza space and reduction of static visual clutter (signposts, traffic lights etc.) and dynamic visual clutter (cars, buses) will provide an improved context from which to appreciate the heritage landmark buildings of Trinity College and the Bank of Ireland building. The use of uncomplicated and high quality stone sett paving throughout the plaza will also strengthen the sense of built heritage whilst providing an understated apron for the heritage buildings and facades to once again be the main players within the College Green setting.

The removal of east-west traffic through College Green (to and from Dame Street) will also help to transform the space from one of dynamic traffic movement, potential danger and congestion to social and meeting space that is likely to be regarded as the heart of the city centre. It will still be something of a movement space but focussed at the more human scale of pedestrians and cyclists. Though there will still be north-south public transport thoroughfare to the fore of the Trinity building, this will be much lighter in volume than before private vehicles were excluded (prior to the Luas Cross City works). The singular combined public transport corridor, including Luas tracks and dedicated bus / taxi corridors, will also be a much more organised traffic flow system than previously occurred through and around College Green. As well as providing necessary cross town traffic flow and public transport access to the city centre, the movement of the Luas, buses and taxis across the eastern end of College Green strikes a balance between College Green becoming a static plaza space and retaining some element of a dynamic movement space. Light rail / tram networks (such as the Luas) are frequently the main form of transport within city centres throughout Europe and these tend to add to the liveliness of an urban environment rather than detracting from it.

The loss of a number of mature Plane trees from the central section of College Green is likely to reduce visual amenity slightly as these substantial sized trees serve to soften the urban context and provide a sense of establishment. Indeed, mature street trees almost always contribute positively to streetscapes and can be the defining element in some instances. However, it is not considered that the existing Plane trees within College Green are the defining element given the heritage landmark buildings that define the space. Indeed, the mature trees within College Green tend to enclose the space and reduce the visibility of these heritage buildings and facades. By way of compensation it is proposed to retain the mature Plane trees around Foster Place and to replant a row of semi-mature Plane trees along the southern side of the plaza. As these establish they will begin to contribute to the amenity of the space in a similar manner to the existing mature trees, but are more appropriately placed so as not to divide and shade the plaza or restrict visibility of the Trinity building and the Bank of Ireland building.

They will, however, partially screen the facades of buildings along the southern side of College Green. Overall, the improved placement of the new semi-mature Plane trees and the retention of the mature trees around Foster Place are considered to balance the loss of the mature trees from the centre of the College Green.

Another benefit of removing the central line of mature trees within College Green is that the visual axis along Dame Street from Dublin Castle to the Trinity College building (an indicative designated view in the CDP) is improved. The reinforcement of physical and visual axis is central to the proposed College Green plaza design. This includes the east – west axis along Dame Street as well as the minor axis between Church Lane and Foster Place, the intersection of which will now be defined by the ‘Circus’ feature centred around the Thomas Davis statue and incorporating the four provinces fountain. The Henry Grattan Statue at the eastern end of the plaza is also moved slightly to reinforce the alignment of the Plaza with the Trinity College Building. However, this subtle movement of the Grattan Statue is cognisant of its relationship to the Goldsmith and Burke statues in the lawns on either side of the Trinity College entrance.

The design of the plaza is not solely focussed on the pragmatics of movement and axis alignment and also incorporates a sense of fun through the installation of ground mounted fountains within the centre of the space. These will add to the dynamism and liveliness of the space when in operation and will not unduly impede or divide the space when not in use. Indeed, one of the key aspects of the design is its simplicity, which allows it to be a multifunctional node for occasional events. There is minimal street furniture and planting to soften the plaza and facilitate its users as well as a consistent ground treatment that subtly defines areas of use. This design simplicity allows the space itself and the defining landmark buildings to be the key features, rather the elements that fill the plaza. Such an approach appears to be consistent with the historic use of College Green as a social and civic space, within the heart of Dublin rather than the cluttered traffic dominated junction it had become over time.

In terms of the urban fabric of the inner city and the analysis of this in relation to Lynch’s ‘Image of the City’ (see 13.3.3), the proposed College Green development is likely to alter user perceptions. It is considered that College Green itself will become a much stronger urban node and the even the epicentre of the city for many. College Green will be weakened as a ‘path’ and intersection of paths due to the removal of east west through traffic. Trinity and the Bank of Ireland building will have a stronger presence as defining elements of the space due to the reduction in traffic and visual clutter including mature street trees. This will reinforce them as ‘landmarks’ within the city and also as the defining ‘edges’ of the trinity ‘district’ and the Temple Bar ‘district’. Whilst Lynch’s urban elements are not inherently positive or negative in their own right, the overriding principle is legibility and collective comprehension of urban fabric and character. In this respect, it is considered that the proposed College Green development strengthens the legibility and function of Dublin’s inner city for both locals and visitors alike.

In terms of indirect / secondary impacts, the Proposed Project will result in the redistributing of east-west through traffic to and from Dame Street. There will be a turning head at the western end of the plaza for public transport, which will then return westwards along Dame Street.

There will be a net increase of buses along the North and South Quays, Winetavern Street, College Street and Parliament Street as part of the altered traffic management plan. In some cases, this will result in considerable peak time increases in bus numbers – equivalent to about 1 extra bus every 1-2 minutes on average. Though double-decker buses could represent a considerable visual obstruction when stationary, they are transient. Thus, any visual obstruction of building facades, river views etc. is momentary. Although buses might be reasonably frequent and even slow moving during peak commuter times, they are a typical inner city feature and any obstruction or intrusion on views will be fleeting.

On the basis of all of the factors outlined above, it is considered that the proposed College Green development, once completed, will have a **Positive** impact on townscape character and that this **Very High** sensitivity urban setting will be **Enhanced** in accordance with the Townscape Impact Matrix contained in **Section 11.2.7.1**.

11.4.2 Visual Impacts

11.4.2.1 Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Based on the criteria and considerations contained in **Section 11.2.7.2** there is a balance of factors to be weighed in determining visual receptor sensitivity in this dynamic urban setting. However, it is considered that given the relatively confined visual context of College Green, all of the views can be considered to be of similar sensitivity.

Visual receptors (people and groups of people) who experience views of College Green range between, those identified in GLVIA-2013 as being highly susceptible to visual change (residents and tourists) and those that are less susceptible (commuters and workers). Taking a cautious approach, it must be considered that visual receptors within the context of College Green are highly susceptible to visual change, but mainly in relation to key permanent elements and not dynamic and non-permanent change due to congestion, traffic and advertising etc.

In terms of the value of the views on offer, this is a key heritage node in Dublin City Centre contained by landmark heritage buildings and containing important monuments and statues. Although the visual context is generally busy and cluttered, there are aspects of the scene that are highly valued and contribute to high order visual amenity.

On balance of the fact that views towards and across College Green are highly dynamic and cluttered, but there are framed by important permanent heritage features it is considered that visual receptors have a **High-medium** level of sensitivity to visual change of a permanent nature.

11.4.2.2 Magnitude of visual impacts – Construction Stage

Photomontages from selected viewpoints have not been prepared for the purposes of appraising construction stage visual impacts. This is on the basis that depicting the associated dynamic effects of construction works in a static image is difficult to achieve in terms of accuracy and impossible to achieve in terms of its dynamic and multifaceted nature.

During the construction stage College Green will be a relatively extensive construction site surrounded by a temporary hoarding, but allowing partial visibility of construction machinery and worker welfare facilities etc. There will also be HGVs delivering and removing materials from site and the constant movement of workers to and from site. Mature trees will be removed from the central portion of the site and the visual amenity and softening of the built environment that they offer will be lost in the short to medium term. The construction works and associated hoardings may intrude on iconic views of Trinity College and the Bank of Ireland building as well as axial views along Dame Street. There is also likely to be dust and debris within and around the site that will contribute to an overall reduction in tidiness and visual amenity around College Green.

Vehicles (other than bicycles) will be excluded from east- west transit through College Green at the beginning of the construction stage and will not return after construction is finished. A minimum 20m wide pedestrian / cycle zone will be maintained to the southern side of College Green for the majority of the construction stage in order to maintain free-flowing east – west access. Once safe access can be provided along the northern side of college Green the pedestrian / cycle access will reverse until such time as the works are completed in their entirety.

The main ameliorating factor in relation to construction stage visual impacts is that they will be temporary / short term in terms of duration. It is also important to consider that the baseline scenario for College Green is a busy and cluttered visual environment where the main aspects of visual amenity are the heritage buildings that define the space.

On the basis of the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of construction stage visual impacts is deemed to be **Medium-low**. When coupled with the **High-medium** viewer sensitivity, the overall significance of construction stage townscape impacts is deemed to be **Moderate** in accordance with the Townscape / Visual Impact Matrix contained in **Section 11.2.7.1**.

11.4.2.3 Magnitude of Visual Impacts – Operational stage

Photomontages have been prepared from six viewpoints to aid the appraisal of Operational Stage visual impacts. These depict the design of the scheme once constructed compared to the baseline visual context at the time the photography for the photomontages was captured. For contextual simplicity, this includes the construction works for the Luas Cross City line, which adds a degree of additional clutter to some of the baseline images. Although it could be considered preferable to prepare a baseline scenario of the completed Luas works (as these will be completed independently of the Proposed Project) this would have to include existing east – west traffic through College Green. A scenario that has not been fully investigated and which may not be feasible once the Luas Cross City is operational.

The selected viewpoint locations are outlined in **Table 11.5** and independently appraised thereafter.

Table 11.5 - Selected viewpoint locations

Viewpoint No.	Viewpoint Location	Direction of view
VP1a	Northern side of College Green	SE
VP1b	Northern side of College Green	SW
VP2	South-western corner of College Green	NE
VP3	Southern side of College Green	N
VP4	Trinity College entrance	W
VP5	Westmoreland Street	SW
VP6	Grafton Street	N

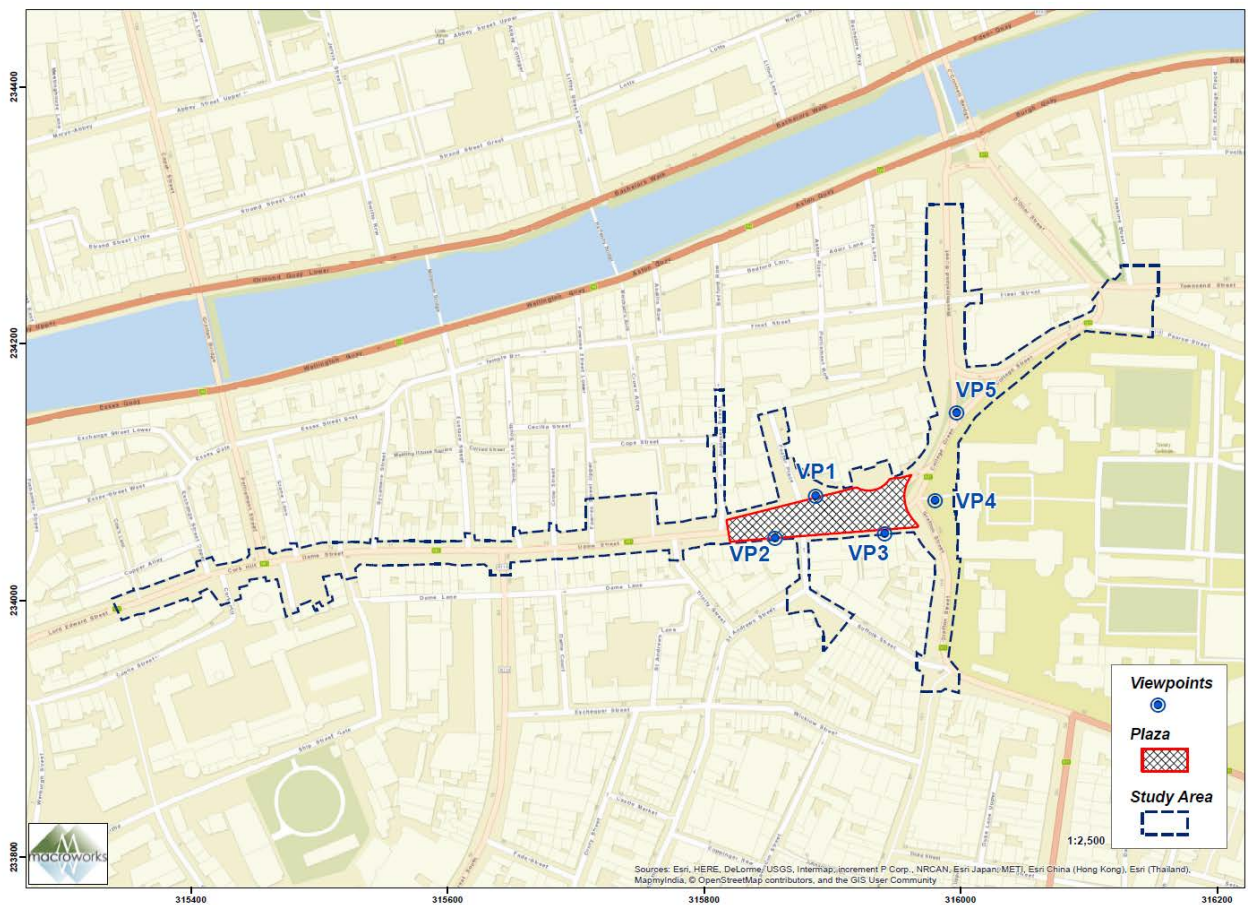


Figure 11.3 - Viewpoint Locations - College Green Plaza

Viewshed Reference Point		View Direction	
VP1b	Northern side of College Green	SW	
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium		
Description of Existing View	<p>This is a view from near the entrance to Foster Place looking towards Trinity College across the eastern end of College Green. The scene is framed to the north (left) by the dominating pillars of the Bank of Ireland building and the Thomas Davis statue is contained at the right hand side of the view on the traffic island that divides College Green. The façade of Trinity and the buildings on the southern side of street are only partially obscured by the winter trees that line the centre of College Green. The ground plane is dominated by tarmac road surface. In addition to the trees and monuments on the central traffic island there are numerous bike stands, heritage lampposts and signs.</p>		
Visual Impact (Operational Stage)	<p>Once construction works are completed, the view is transformed from a substantial traffic corridor to a pedestrian plaza. There is a stronger sense of openness and a clearer view of Trinity College. The scene is much less cluttered but remains vibrant. The public transport corridor is apparent at the western end of the plaza, but is not strongly delineated at the ground plane giving a sense of continuity. The new line of trees (depicted in early leaf) will partially obscure the upper facades of buildings on the southern edge of the Plaza, but without fully masking them. The Thomas Davis statue has been moved further to the west such that it is no longer contained in the depicted view. The Henry Grattan Statue is moved subtly to the left and is slightly more prominent without the same degree of visual clutter surrounding it.</p> <p>For the reasons outlined above, the nature of the visual change is deemed to be Positive.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 11.2.7.1 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
Factor	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
Appraisal	High-medium	Positive	Enhanced

Viewshed Reference Point		View Direction
VP1b	South-western corner of College Green	NW
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium	
Description of Existing View	<p>This view is from the same location as VP1a, but looking in a south-westerly direction across College Green and along Dame Street to the west. Across a broad multilane roadway and traffic island the most prominent feature of the view is the ornate Hibernian Bank Building (now H&M). Along Church Lane, which divides this building from the more modern façade of the Ulster Bank building can be seen a glimpse of St Andrew's Church. Further along Dame Street is an eclectic mix of building facades that vary in tone and style and architectural treatment. The entrance to Foster Place opens up to the right hand side of the view.</p>	
Visual Impact (Operational Stage)	<p>In the proposed scenario, the broad tarmacadam roadway is replaced by the pedestrian plaza, the most distinctive feature of which, is the 'circus' in the immediate foreground. This hosts the relocated Four Provinces fountain at its centre and relocated Thomas Davis Statue at its perimeter, both contained on a slightly raised radial island. Subtle variations in paving tone and texture delineate the dedicated pedestrian zone along the edge of the plaza from the shared (occasional traffic) surface along the centre of the western end of the Plaza (the circus serves as a vehicle turnaround). Corten steel planter tubs bike stands and newly planted street trees also reinforce the subtle delineation of surface function avoiding the need for changes in paving level that would otherwise disrupt the open plaza.</p> <p>In combination with other street furniture elements, the new lines of street trees along the sides of the Plaza give a greater sense of confinement to the western end of the Plaza than eastern end. This tends to accentuate the broadening wedge shape of the College Green space and will increase the sense of arrival at the eastern (pedestrian only) end of the plaza. This also subtly transforms the space from one of movement into one of congregation. The new lines of street trees will partially mask the view of the southern building facades. However they are offset from the building lines to a degree that both northern and southern building facades have enough space to be appreciated, particularly from the respective sides of the plaza.</p> <p>For the reasons outlined above, the proposed works will be a Positive contribution to the visual setting of College Green when viewed from this location.</p>	

Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 11.2.7.1 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	High-medium	Positive	Enhanced

Viewshed Reference Point		View Direction
VP2	South-western corner of College Green	NE
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium	
Description of Existing View	<p>This is a north-easterly view towards the Bank of Ireland building and Foster Place from the south-western portion of College Green. The foreground and indeed the vast majority of the ground plane is dedicated roadway with pedestrian footpaths along the building frontages and a pedestrian refuge lining the middle of the street. Mature trees within Foster Place provide a partially veiled view of the curved south-western façade of the Bank of Ireland building and a linear cluster of trees within the central island of the street further to the east have a light masking effect in relation to the façade of Trinity. Traffic lights, heritage lamp posts, sign posts, bollards, monuments and bike stands also occupy the central island and the footpaths.</p>	
Visual Impact (Operational Stage)	<p>In the proposed view, the vehicular roadway is converted into a pedestrian plaza. The most prominent aspect of the plaza is the circus feature located on the intersection between the Dame Street axis (east-west) and the Foster Place / Church Lane axis (north-south). At the centre of the circus is the relocated Four Provinces fountain, which was slightly further away and barely noticeable in the baseline view. Similarly, the relocated Thomas Davis statue, which is also nearer the viewer and less bound by clutter is now more prominent. The slightly raised lozenge shaped island shared by the Davis statue and the fountain reduces the sense that the circus feature is dedicated to vehicular traffic (it appears less like a roundabout).</p> <p>The granite paving, which stretches across the plaza, has only subtle variations in texture and tone to demark precincts and therefore seems to broaden College Green giving it a stronger sense of being an open space plaza than a street. This is aided by</p>	

	<p>the removal of kerbs and other vertical delineation in the ground plane.</p> <p>The newly proposed trees will soften the hard forms and materials of the plaza and blend well with the retained Foster Place trees of the same species. From this angle the new line of trees along the southern side of the plaza will partially veil the view of Trinity. However, it is clear that they have been positioned in order to afford unimpeded direct views of Trinity along the east-west (Dame Street) axis. They are also offset from the southern building facades to a generous enough degree that they allow these to be appreciated.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that the proposed plaza is a substantial improvement to the visual quality and structure of this scene and allows the various heritage features and buildings to be appreciated to a much greater extent than the baseline scenario. The visual effect is therefore Positive.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 11.2.7.1 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	High medium	Positive	Enhanced

Viewshed Reference Point		View Direction
VP3	Southern side of College Green	N
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium	
Description of Existing View	<p>This is a view to the north from the south-eastern corner of College Green. The foreground context contains roadside bike stands, three lanes of roadway and a U-turn bay within a central pedestrian refuge island. Contained within the easternmost traffic island are four mature Plane trees surrounding the Henry Grattan statue. Ignoring the hoardings for the Luas works, there are also heritage lampposts, traffic signs and traffic lights on this island. On the opposite side the road is the commanding Bank of Ireland building, which is partially impeded by intervening street paraphernalia. The Trinity building is also visible at the eastern end of College Green in a similar manner.</p>	

	<p>Also visible are more distant buildings at the junction of Westmoreland Street and College Street.</p> <p>It is important to note that Trinity lies beyond the public transport corridor at the northern end of the plaza (currently under construction). Although it is not being assessed as part of this development, there will be some permanent and transient intrusions on the view of Trinity from vehicles and the overhead Luas lines.</p>		
<p>Visual Impact (Operational Stage)</p>	<p>Once the proposed works are complete this view across College Green will be substantially altered from a roadway context to a pedestrian plaza. This is the broadest section of the plaza and most likely to be used as a social space and meeting point. This function is reflected in the provision of seating, particularly around the focus of this end of the space, which is the slightly repositioned Grattan statue. Ornate heritage lamps will also reinforce this central feature as a focal point. Even though the Grattan statue is marginally further away from the viewer, it becomes a more noticeable feature away from the visual clutter of the existing street scene.</p> <p>The paving across the plaza varies only slightly in tone and texture to demark precincts within the overall space. However, a stronger line of division is provided by a new line of street trees, lightpoles, bike stands and electrical kiosks. These appear to subtly divide a movement space along the southern side of the plaza from a more static social space in the central plaza, which will also contain the paving fountains, which are likely to draw people in (when operational).</p> <p>Although there are a number of intervening elements within the plaza, there is generally a clearer view of the bank of Ireland building and Trinity College. Indeed the overall space and its relationship to the public transport corridor appears much more organised than the existing scenario.</p> <p>Overall, the visual effect is deemed to be Positive.</p>		
<p>Summary</p>	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 11.2.7.1 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.</p>		
	<p>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</p>	<p>Visual Impact Magnitude</p>	<p>Significance of Visual Impact</p>
	<p>High medium</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Enhanced</p>

Viewshed Reference Point		View Direction
VP4	Trinity College entrance	W
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium	
Description of Existing View	<p>This is an axial view from the front of Trinity looking back along College Green down Dame Street. The reverse view from Dublin Castle is indicatively identified as being a designated view in the CDP towards the façade of Trinity. Ignoring the construction paraphernalia in the immediate foreground, the ground plane of this street scene is dominated by vehicular roadway running across the front of Trinity and also along both sides of College Green. The east – west roads are divided by a traffic island containing a cramped cluster of mature trees lighting columns, traffic lights and signs surrounding the Henry Grattan statue. On the southern side of the street is a series of vibrant and eclectic building façades. The northern side of the street is dominated by the Romanesque façade of the Bank of Ireland building. There is a distinct narrowing of the street as it transitions from College Green into Dame Street.</p>	
Visual Impact (Operational Stage)	<p>In the imminent future scenario, the foreground of this view will be dominated by the public transport corridor (Luas and bus/taxi lanes) that will sweep across the front of Trinity regardless of whether the Proposed Project proceeds. Beyond this corridor the proposed pedestrian plaza will appear to expand the width of College Green by presenting a clearer view of the sky and removing the influence of tall vertical elements, particularly the mature central trees. The slightly repositioned Grattan statue will be a more distinctive feature due to the removal of cluttering elements around it. The statue has been repositioned so that it is on direct axis with the front of Trinity, to which it faces, whilst its triangular relationship with the Goldsmith and Burke statues (in the lawns to the front of Trinity) is also retained. The new line of street trees, off-centre to the south of the plaza, also reinforce this visual axis by allowing it to be opened up (existing central line of trees removed) and framing it. This is also to the benefit of the potential designated view in the opposite direction from Dame Street. Whilst the new line of street trees will partially obscure the southern building facades at upper levels, the nearest two or three buildings at the corner of Grafton street will be unimpeded. There is also enough space remaining between the trees and building frontages for the facades to be fully appreciated from other parts of plaza.</p> <p>Overall, the view of the proposed pedestrian plaza at College Green is considered to be a substantial improvement to the street</p>	

	scene in comparison to the existing scenario. Thus, it has a Positive visual effect.		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 11.2.7.1 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	High medium	Positive	Enhanced

Viewshed Reference Point		View Direction
VP5	Westmoreland Street	SW
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium	
Description of Existing View	<p>This is a view across the front of Trinity in the direction of Grafton Street, which can be seen winding away from the viewer to the south. The view is framed in the foreground by the commanding Trinity building to the left and the Bank of Ireland building to the right. This ground plane of this view will be dominated by the sweeping public transport corridor (buses taxis and the Luas) that replaces the conventional roadway that runs north-south through the eastern end of College Green (construction works visible in the baseline image). The road corridor also currently diverges to the west along both sides of College Green in the direction of Dame Street. A traffic island can be seen between these roads, which contains a cluster of mature trees. Two further trees are located on the corner of Lower Grafton street on the opposite side of the road. Together, these trees partially screen the distinctive building facades on the south-eastern Corner of College Green.</p>	
Visual Impact (Operational Stage)	<p>Only the eastern end of the proposed pedestrian plaza can be seen from here replacing the carriageways and central traffic island that currently occupy College Green. The space will appear more open as a result of the removal of the mature trees and other elements of visual clutter. Although the new items of street furniture surrounding the slightly relocated Henry Grattan statue are visible from here, they are not prominent especially set against the complex backdrop of intricate building facades.</p>	

	The newly proposed line of street trees along the southern side of the plaza will partially screen the southern building facades, but to no greater degree than the existing mature trees (that will be removed) currently do. For the reasons outline above the visual effect of the proposed pedestrian plaza is considered to be Positive .		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 11.2.7.1 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	High medium	Positive	Enhanced

11.4.2.1 Visual Impact Summary

Based on the appraisal of visual impacts contained in section 11.4.2.3 above, it is considered that there will be negative effects on the visual context of College Green during the construction stage of the proposed plaza and that these will be Moderate in terms of significance. However, following completion of the plaza the visual effects at all six of the representative viewpoints are considered to be positive and the visual setting enhanced. This is principally due to the transformation of this space from a cluttered and traffic-dominated junction into a simply organised social and civic space. It is also a function of the use of high quality materials that reflect the heritage setting, strengthening of visual axis, the opening up of clearer views of landmark buildings and monuments as well as a general de-cluttering of the space.

11.5 Mitigation measures

Given that the Proposed Project, once constructed, is considered to have a positive impact on the visual setting of College Green as well as its structure and function within the context of the surrounding urban fabric, it is not warranted to provide any long term forms of mitigation.

Only during the construction phase is mitigation considered necessary in respect of townscape and visual issues. These relate to ensuring that College Green does not become a place that will be avoided by locals and visitors during the 12-18 month construction period. Effects that could give rise to this situation relate to perceived danger, congestion, way-finding confusion, scattering of dust and debris and overall visual clutter and disharmony. Mitigation to reduce these adverse construction related effects is principally the concern of the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (an outline is provided in Appendix 4.1). This will include the form of site hoarding, which in this instance should be solid and well constructed to reduce visibility of the on-going works and will also reduce the noise and dust emissions from the site. It is proposed that the solid hoardings will also include images of the future plaza as this can remind those affected of the long-term benefit of the temporary works.

Pedestrian and cycle movement areas will be generous in dimension and clearly presented in terms of directional movement to avoid confusion. Areas outside of the site hoarding will also be kept clear of dust and debris.

11.6 Residual Impacts

As outlined in **Section 11.5**, there is no need to mitigate the operational stage of the development as it is deemed to result in positive impacts that will enhance the townscape of College Green and its environs. However, it is considered that if the construction stage mitigation measures to achieve a tidy and orderly site are appropriately implemented, the predicted 'Moderate' significance of visual impact (**Section 11.4.2.2**) will reduce to **Moderate-slight**.

11.7 Difficulties Encountered

The main difficulty encountered for this project was the determination of an appropriate baseline scenario given the on-going Luas Cross City works through the eastern end of College Green. This imminent project is separate, but integrated with College Green Project appraised herein and as such it should be considered as the imminent and permanent baseline scenario. However, it was under construction at the time the base photography for the photomontages was captured generating considerable visual clutter and reducing baseline visual amenity. Whilst the existing (baseline) scenes used in the photomontage set include the construction works for the Luas Cross City, they have not been described and do not influence the appraisal, which is instead based on the assumption of the Proposed Project in the context of the completed Luas / bus corridor.

11.8 References

Lynch, Kevin (1960) *The Image of the City*. Cambridge

Dublin City Council (2016) *Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022*. Dublin, Ireland.

Figures

- Figure 1 VP1a Existing
- Figure 2 VP1a Montage
- Figure 3 VP1a with Fountain
- Figure 4 VP2 Existing
- Figure 5 VP2 Montage
- Figure 6 VP2 with Fountain
- Figure 7 VP3 Existing
- Figure 8 VP3 Montage
- Figure 9 VP3 with Fountain
- Figure 10 VP4 Existing
- Figure 11 VP4 Montage
- Figure 12 VP5 Existing
- Figure 13 VP5 Montage

College Green Project

Photomontages

This book contains imagery for the viewpoints selected
for the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

May 2017

Note that the recommended viewing distance of 40cm only applies
to this imagery when it is printed at full scale (297mm x 700mm)



Date: 8th January, 2017 Time: 14:08 Easting: 715813 Northing: 734108

Direction of View from Grid North

To view this panorama as a flat image one must move from left to right along its length whilst maintaining a perpendicular viewing direction and an approximate viewing distance of 40cm. To see this entire panoramic scene in reality would necessitate turning one's head through 60 degrees.

This verified panoramic image has been captured, compiled and presented in accordance with guidance from the Landscape Institute (UK) Refer to: Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11, Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment, Sections 3 & 4



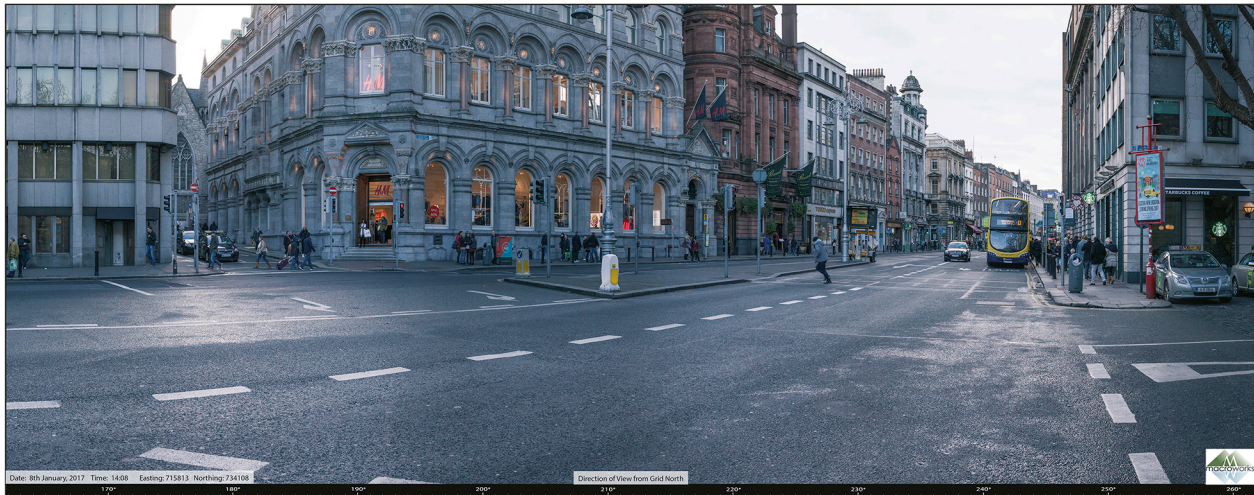


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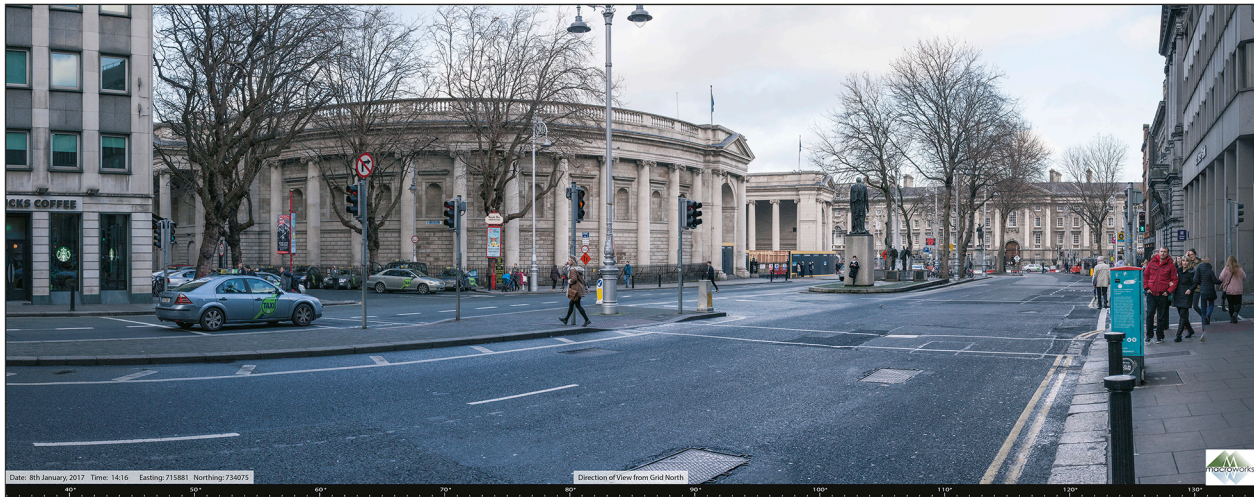
Date: 8th January, 2017 Time: 14:08 Easting: 715813 Northing: 734108

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To view this panorama as a flat image one must move from left to right along its length whilst maintaining a perpendicular viewing direction and an approximate viewing distance of 40cm. To see this entire panoramic scene in reality would necessitate turning one's head through 60 degrees.

This verified panoramic image has been captured, compiled and presented in accordance with guidance from the Landscape Institute (UK). Refer to: Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11, Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment, Sections 3 & 4



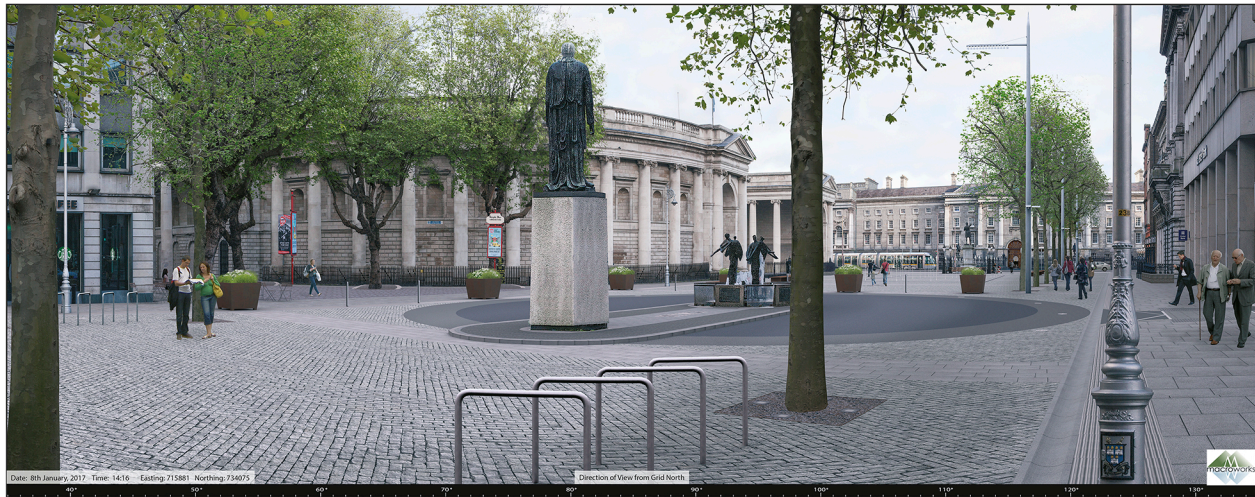


Date: 8th January, 2017 Time: 14:16 Easting: 715881 Northing: 734075

Direction of View from Grid North

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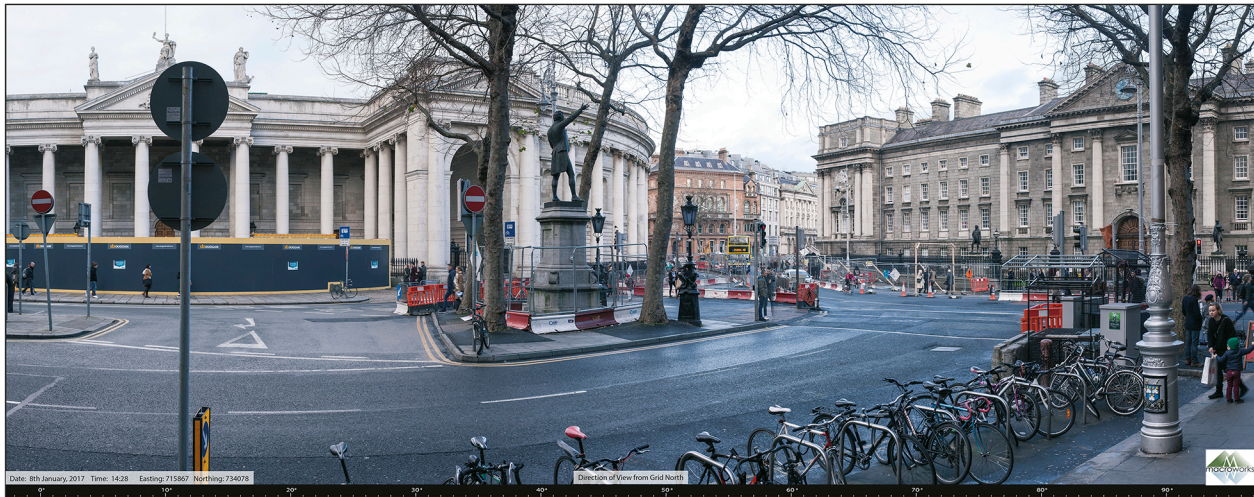
Date: 8th January, 2017 Time: 14:16 Easting: 715881 Northing: 734075

Direction of View from Grid North

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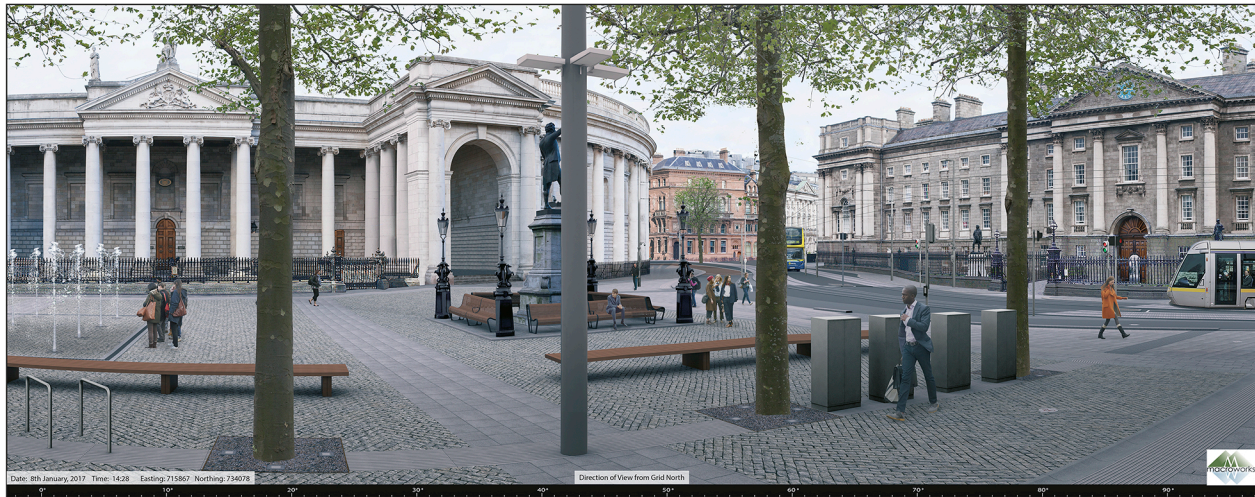




To view this panorama as a flat image one must move from left to right along its length whilst maintaining a perpendicular viewing direction and an approximate viewing distance of 40cm. To see this entire panoramic scene in reality would necessitate turning one's head through 60 degrees.

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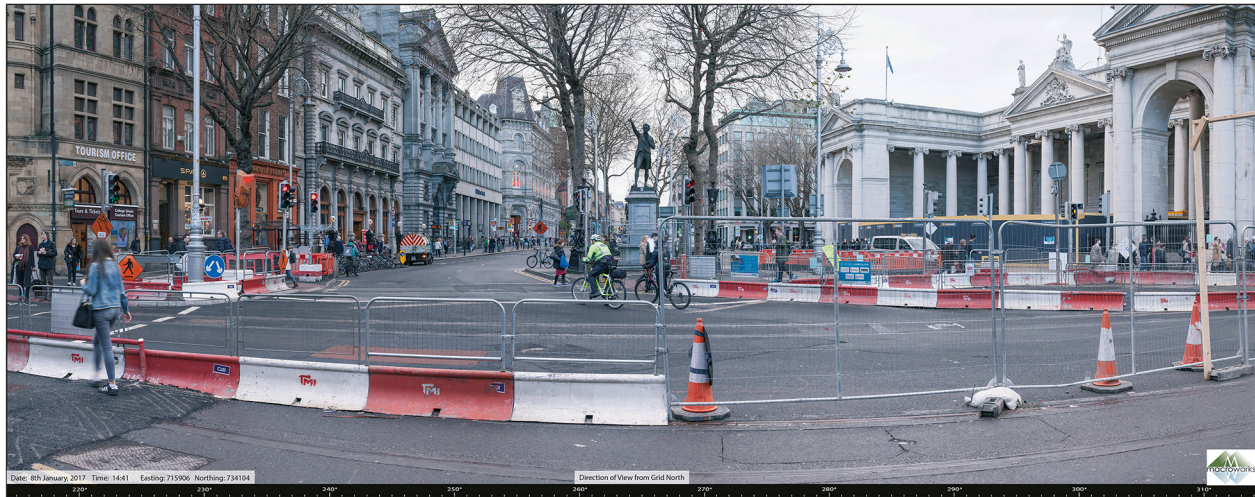


Date: 8th January, 2017 Time: 14:28 Easting: 715867 Northing: 734078

Direction of View from Grid North

To view this panorama as a flat image one must move from left to right along its length whilst maintaining a perpendicular viewing direction and an approximate viewing distance of 40cm. To see this entire panoramic scene in reality would necessitate turning one's head through 60 degrees.

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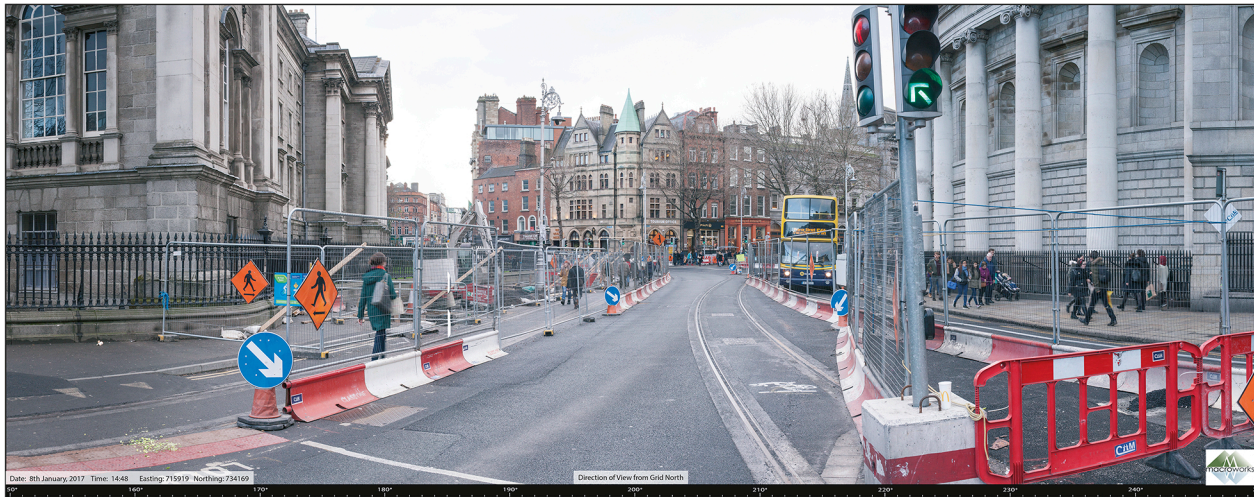




To view this panorama as a flat image one must move from left to right along its length whilst maintaining a perpendicular viewing direction and an approximate viewing distance of 40cm. To see this entire panoramic scene in reality would necessitate turning one's head through 60 degrees.

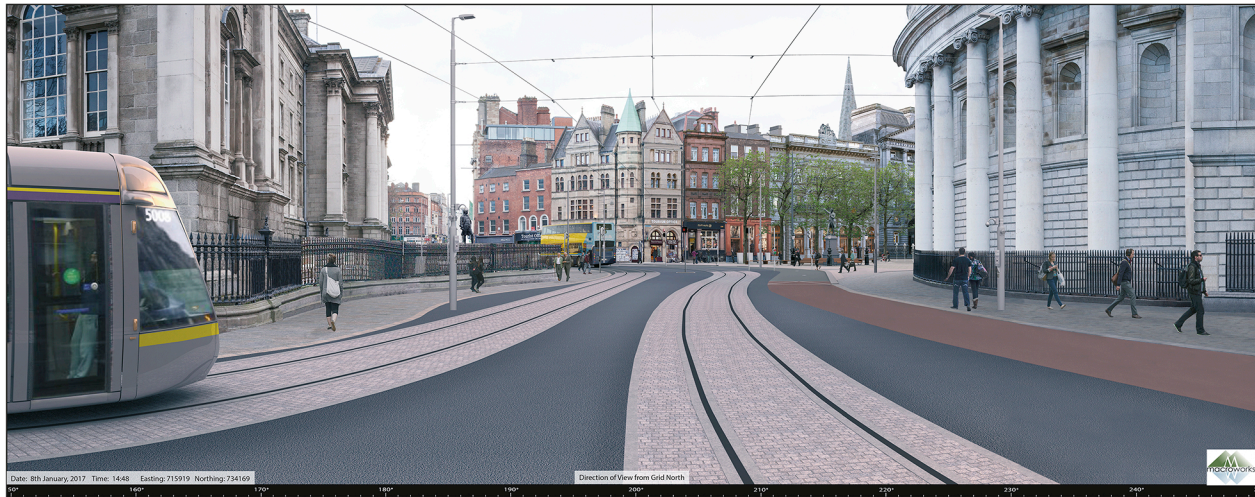
This verified panoramic image has been captured, compiled and presented in accordance with guidance from the Landscape Institute (UK) Refer to: Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11, Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment, Sections 3 & 4





To view this panorama as a flat image one must move from left to right along its length whilst maintaining a perpendicular viewing direction and an approximate viewing distance of 40cm. To see this entire panoramic scene in reality would necessitate turning one's head through 60 degrees.

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Date: 8th January, 2017 Time: 14:48 Easting: 715919 Northing: 734169

Direction of View from Grid North

To view this panorama as a flat image one must move from left to right along its length whilst maintaining a perpendicular viewing direction and an approximate viewing distance of 40cm. To see this entire panoramic scene in reality would necessitate turning one's head through 60 degrees.

This verified panoramic image has been captured, compiled and presented in accordance with guidance from the Landscape Institute (UK) Refer to: Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11, Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment, Sections 3 & 4